

DRAFT

UPWARD MOBILITY

1. Upward mobility as a personnel problem appears to exist significantly at only one place in the ORD structure. This conclusion is based on the April 1975 printout of office staffing versus grades and positions. The current structure adequately provides for advancement, based on merit and performance, with the exception of the position of senior secretary at the GS-07 level. Unlike upper management and certain other specialized positions which are constrained by definition, an individual reaching this level has few options for advancement within their profession. The options that do exist are severely limited in number with the result that a potentially valuable pool of talent remains untapped. Recognizing this situation and taking into account recent changes in Agency training policies, two alternate means have been identified for alleviating the problem. These complementary alternatives have in common the result that the individual's profession is changed. By effecting the change, career possibilities can be identified that parallel the scientific professionals, namely, a three-to-four grade advancement range. If the program is implemented and proves successful, it will provide the desired mobility within ORD and should also allow for possible lateral transfers to other offices. As such, the entire program could be employed throughout the Directorate

without major modification if so desired. A consequence of this particular approach is a temporary increase in the number of personnel, a slight transitory salary increase, and essentially no change in the grade-point average.

2. In general there are four ways an individual may advance career-wise if he or she has reached the top of their position. Briefly these are:

- a. Reclassification of position.
- b. Transfer to a higher grade position.
- c. Undergo formal training leading to qualification for an entirely different position.
- d. Participate in a program based on evolutionary growth and supplementary training leading to a different but related position.

The latter two, "c" and "d", form the essence of the proposed ORD upward mobility program. Management policy must be established in order that either of these approaches will be effective. The emphasis that the proposed policy can bring to bear is focused on the new initiatives represented by "c" and "d" above and ignores those options that have proven fruitless in the past as well as those initiatives that rightly are in the province of the individual.

- a. Reclassification of Position. Position upgrading in principle could affect everyone but represents a one-time upward adjustment of the grade ceilings and not a coherent program for

upward mobility. In addition, recent ORD experiences in attempting to accomplish this are notable for their failures. Several attempts have been made to upgrade specific positions and/or individuals through the Personnel Management Division. These attempts have been coupled with extensive Agency training courses, complete documentation of the performance and duties of the individuals, and have not been specialized jobs such as personnel officer, B&F officer, property officer, etc. In fact, they have been related to rather generalized talents, specifically, that of senior secretaries. Given this failure rate, it has been concluded that this is not a viable approach for the career development of ORD personnel.

b. Transfer to a Higher Grade Position. This particular avenue, that of transferring to a higher grade position, is in principle the domain of the individual. It should be, and most certainly is the policy of ORD, to assist in every way possible such transfers when they become available. This category presumes basically the same skills although implied is a higher proficiency in them, i.e., division secretary transferred to Office of Director secretary. The source of the problem in this

particular case, however, is analogous to that of upper management in that by definition there are a limited number of such positions and the number of qualified personnel significantly exceeds the number of positions available.

c. Formal Training Leading to Totally New Qualifications. The recent policy of the Agency with regard to outside training opens this avenue as a viable approach for advancement. In light of the lifting of the requirement that outside training be job-related, it would seem that this is an ideal situation for a person to train at Government expense for a totally different position. The difficulty with this, however, is that it would require a great deal of after-hours-effort since the individual would be learning a totally new profession. An example might be that of pursuing college courses in accounting so as to qualify as a B&F officer. ORD would seem to be the ideal office for such a program in light of the wide variety of professions represented on the technical staff. It is recommended that policy be established such that the professional staff be made available for guidance in course selection, career guidance within a professional field, and a limited amount of tutoring where necessary. The assistance would be formally provided only for those qualified individuals embarking

on a coherent plan. It should be recognized that anyone successfully completing a training program such as this will most likely transfer immediately to another component.

d. Evolutionary Growth Leading to Different but Related Positions. The thrust of this approach would be to identify a career path that would branch off from a secretarial status at about the GS-07 level. Such a branch-off would thus provide qualified individuals with a means to begin acquiring new skills leading ultimately to a new position entitled Associate Project Officer. The details of job description and the mechanism for creation of such positions are described in Appendix A. More importantly, however, is the recognition of the benefits to the secretarial staff and to the professional officers. In the first instance, a growth path has been identified whereby those persons that are qualified by virtue of their talent and desire can effect a change in profession. This change would be evolutionary and built upon talents and skills presently in hand, supplemented by appropriate training, and characterized by the demands of the position increasing with grade. Such a program should have a rippling effect throughout the entire secretarial complement as far as morale is concerned.

since advancement becomes tied to performance and the willingness of the individual to extend one's self. In the second instance, that of the professional staff, creation of such positions would provide a better utilization of high-level technical talent. This would be accomplished by freeing the staff scientists from technical and administrative detail. Such detail is normally handled in commercial organizations by positions similar to those being proposed in this plan. Several laboratories have been queried as to the ratio of senior scientist to "Associate Project Officer." The average ratio turns out to be ten-to-one which, interestingly enough, would suggest one such position per major operating division within ORD.

3. The net effect of implementing this plan depends upon precisely which of the options is selected. From the grade-point-average view, this can range between no practical change to a slight decrease in the short term. Salary-wise, the immediate results could be as little as \$15.5K additional per year to as much as \$48K. In the long run, however, the overall effect would be a savings of \$26K per year and an insignificant change in grade point average (one point out of 1040). Turning to the number of people on board, this again depends upon the implementation option selected, but the

variation runs from the addition of one to increasing the number by four.

4. The conclusion of this study is twofold. Namely, that if an absolute limit on personnel must be maintained, then the group suffering from lack of mobility cannot be helped, and secondly, if a short-term perturbation is allowable, a substantive career development program can and has been identified. In the latter case, the short-term increase would be eliminated by the normal growth of the professional staff as described in Appendix A but essentially assumes downgrading three vacant GS-13 slots. It is further assumed that S&T would allow this minor variation in the ORD scheme of things so as to implement such a plan which has multi-faceted benefits. The first of which is that a growth path has been identified whereby a talented individual can enter the Agency ranks at a low level such as a GS-03 or 04 and literally advance to professional status. The most immediate benefit to ORD is that it tends to relieve the career bottleneck that the current senior secretarial people are faced with in that it presents a three-grade span, eight through ten, for further development. Undoubtedly there will be an impact upon morale once it is recognized that through this evolutionary course merit will be rewarded, built upon, and developed. Another aspect of the proposed approach is that it provides for better utilization of all talents--professional as well as non-professional. The final point concerning this is that the individual

would not necessarily be limited to a career within ORD since, as this expanded role is perfected, the person could and should have intrinsic value to the other technical offices, at least within the Directorate. From an office viewpoint this two-pronged approach could be developed and made the model for career development Agency-wide.